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When the PATH OF LIFE Crosses the RIVER OF TIME: Multivalent Bridge Metaphor in Literary Contexts

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Abstract

Joseph Gies has remarked, "A bridge is to a river what a diamond is to ring." (Gies 1964: 303) For this very reason, authors tend to use bridges either metaphorically or not at all. To incorporate a bridge depiction at random into a literary work is to add indiscriminate emphasis and risk distracting the reader from whatever else the text has to offer.

Having said this, bridge metaphor is not one-dimensional. Bridges can evoke both the development of a positive human relationship and the ending of such a relationship through the death of an individual. Bridges can metaphorically link opposing ideologies by creating a point of dialogue between them or accentuate the perceived differences. The crossing of a bridge can display a character's decisiveness but may also mirror a sudden twist of fate described in the narrative. In some literary works, bridges even function as sacrificial altars.

Consequently, when authors incorporate bridge metaphor into a text, such metaphor is rarely univocal. To the extent that the various bridge metaphors are often extensions of differing or even conflicting basic level conceptual metaphors, semantic resonance often results. In "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge," Ambrose Bierce transfixes a doomed man at a gallows located on a bridge and allows him to envision future events through the flow of the river below. In this inconsistent formulation, the mutually incompatible conceptual metaphors **LIFE IS A JOURNEY** and **TIME IS A RIVER** are subtly incorporated, causing metaphorical time to move in two spatial directions, both across the bridge as the protagonist moves on his life's journey toward his impending death and down the river into an imagined future. Such multivalent metaphor is typical in literary texts that depict bridges. Okamoto Kanoko's "*Kawa*" and Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* also demonstrate the complex ways in which diverse bridge metaphor aspects can be integrated into a text.

Metaphorical analysis, then, should not end with the observation that some

single conceptual metaphor appears to be active in a text. On the contrary, depending on the complexity of the metaphorical theme, richer semantic aspects may become evident through closer examination. When differing metaphorical aspects of a single theme coalesce within a literary work, there is but one word to describe the effect created: symbolism. Indeed, the fact that the rather slippery concept of symbolism can be concretely explained in terms of conceptual metaphor provides further confirmation of the value of cognitive linguistics in the study of literature.

Key words: bridge, metaphor, symbolism, Okamoto Kanoko, Ernest Hemingway, Ambrose Bierce, "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge," *A Farewell to Arms*

I. Introduction

Pyschologist Raymond W. Gibbs, Jr. recommends using the tools of cognitive linguistics and psychology to shed light on literature. Gibbs states:

> Advocates of feminist, historicist and post-colonial perspectives have provided some wonderful, although empirically speculative, ideas about how literary criticism can illuminate hidden forces at work in the creation of texts. Yet in some cases, these scholars don't demonstrate how these hidden forces might be tied to more fundamental cognitive processes that motivate authors' creating texts in the ways that they do. I'm not sure how feasible it is to expect such linkages to be established given the differing skills, and interests, of humanists and cognitive scientists. But one step is to explicitly acknowledge that a real author's conscious and unconscious mind constitutes an important guide force to the meanings attributed to literary texts. (Gibbs 1999: 251-252)

This paper represents an initial response to Gibbs's challenge. The research presented here continues the work of "The Bridge Project," (Strack 2004) a broad, interdisciplinary attempt to understand metaphorical bridge depictions in literary contexts and in so doing to deepen theoretical understanding of metaphor generally.

Before analyzing metaphorical strategies found in specific literary works, I will state a twofold hypothesis about readers of literature. I will assert that readers of literature under-

stand more than they know and they appreciate even more than they understand. In saying this, I'm differentiating between three kinds of responses to literature: knowing, understanding, and appreciating. By "knowing," I mean grasping declarative knowledge that is accessible to conscious awareness and which can be explained using words. "Understanding" refers to things the reader may comprehend but would be hard-pressed to fully explain. "Appreciation" describes an unfocused awareness of semantic richness. [1]

Of these three, knowledge, understanding, and appreciation, metaphor research has tended to address knowledge and understanding at the expense of appreciation. One reason for this is that "appreciation" seems to be a vague concept and therefore sounds unscientific and imprecise. Nevertheless, I will assert that what we vaguely "appreciate" about a poem or story may be even more important to the "literariness" we perceive in it than what we know factually or understand about it. In this paper, by focusing on three particularly metaphor-rich stories, I hope to practically demonstrate the decisive role that the reader's unconscious thought processes play in literary appreciation.

II. Okamoto Kanoko's "*Kawa*"

Okamoto Kanoko's short story, "*Kawa*" ("river" in Japanese) is one of a number of compelling prose works the author wrote in the final few years of her life. [2] The story depicts the relationship of an unnamed woman narrator and Naosuke, a young laborer hired by her parents. To begin the story, the narrator vividly recounts the content of a series of dreams she had experienced in her youth. In this surrealistic opening passage, many material aspects of a nearby river's appearance are interpreted as physical characteristics of an anthropomorphized river deity. In her dreams, the "river god" desires a romantic relationship with her and the narrator seems not averse to such a liaison. Following the unfettered flow of poetic images in the opening passage, more concrete prose depicts a close relationship between Naosuke and the narrator. For example, when the narrator becomes sick and loses her appetite, Naosuke goes up and down the river searching for special types of river fish that will restore her health. She accepts his offerings and begins to teasingly refer to Naosuke as an incarnation of the shape-shifting river god. Thereafter, she loans a book on Greek mythology to Naosuke.

Some time later, a young artist befriends the narrator but Naosuke keeps his distance. When the two invite Naosuke to climb a nearby mountain with them, he chooses rather to continue with his daily chore of buying fish. Finally, the narrator's parents decide that it is time

for her to marry. A match is arranged with the young artist and the narrator does not object. Her father mentions that, according to local custom, a ceremonial bridge must be built across the river and Naosuke is requested to build it.

With heavy heart, Naosuke completes the bridge's construction and the marriage goes ahead as planned. Only a few weeks later, Naosuke falls into the river and drowns. The narrator originally believed Naosuke's death to have been an accident, but more than twenty years later, as she is looking through the book of Greek mythology that Naosuke had returned to her shortly before her marriage, she finds a piece of paper in it upon which the following poem is written:

> Once you have crossed the bridge,
> there will be no crossing back over to this side again.
> Once I have sent you across,
> I will not ever visit the bridge again.
> It is such a bridge that I am now building.
> I have sometimes wished that a flood would come.
> If only the bridge could be washed away.
> But the river god says to me,
> it is not the bridge that should be washed away, but the body.
> So in the end, it comes to this:
> The river turns out to be a grave. (Okamoto 265-266; Strack translation)

As the story ends, the narrator is once again depicted as dreaming of the river god, but the portrayal is no longer that of a small turbulent waterway in springtime but a great frozen tributary, lying vast and white under a cloudy winter sky.

Of course, in terms of declarative knowledge, the plot is straightforward. I will assert, however, that the aspects of the story that give it semantic depth have less to do with the plot itself than with the highly complex metaphorical depiction of Naosuke.

III. Conceptual Dissonance among "Undercurrent" Metaphors

A subtle disharmony is evident in Naosuke's characterization because his identity is tied to at least three mutually exclusive conceptual metaphors: **NAOSUKE IS A RIVER-GOD, NAOSUKE IS**

A SHORE LEFT BEHIND, and **NAOSUKE IS A BRIDGE**. In terms of basic logic, such a composite identity is incoherent but in terms of metaphor, there is no problem. Metaphors do not rigidly relate each and every aspect of one domain to another, they selectively evoke comparisons of certain limited aspects of the two domains.

With respect to the story in question, Naosuke is like a river god because he nourishes the sick narrator with food from the river, he is like a shore left behind because the narrator leaves him to marry another, and he is metonymically tied to the bridge because he has built the bridge that spans the river. In that the river has been anthropomorphized in the opening passage and Naosuke has been associated with the river god, by bridging the river, Naosuke is metaphorically bridging himself and thereby leaves himself behind. These images, taken separately, do not present a logical problem. Each of these aspects of Naosuke's character can be simultaneously true without canceling the other aspects out. Authors commonly switch metaphors within a single literary work.

In fact, though, the metaphorical domains that correspond to Naosuke's character have not primarily been instantiated by simile nor even overt metaphor but by way of megametaphor, a type of well-concealed "undercurrent" metaphor that hints at conceptual associations rather than dictating them. In megametaphor, various aspects of the respective domains are hidden in the details of a story's depiction and are often scattered piecemeal throughout the text. In some cases, the author will briefly foreground the inter-domain connections by hinting at them. In other cases, the two domains remain separate and discrete, leaving readers to connect the inter-domain dots on their own.

While in terms of the plot of Okamoto's story, there is nothing incoherent about saying that Naosuke feeds the narrator food from the river, builds a bridge to be used in her wedding ceremony, and is separated from her by her marriage, to describe him as a "river-god," a "shore left behind," and a "bridge" simultaneously by way of mostly implicit cues results in a subtle paradox at the undercurrent level. [3] Because these metaphors are embedded in the plot, unconscious appreciation of each one is stimulated as the reader negotiates the various events of the story. Finally, Naosuke's poem at the end of the story refers to all three metaphorical domains within a very compact span of only eleven lines, thereby referencing each of the previously submerged metaphors and bringing them to the surface of the reader's consciousness. The simultaneous and explicit activation of each of these undercurrent metaphors coalesces to stimulate deep conceptual interest in Naosuke's depiction and thereby creates a greater level of

resonance than would otherwise have been achieved.

IV. Ambrose Bierce's "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge"

A story that presents a similar conceptual paradox is Ambrose Bierce's "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge." The events of the story occur on a battlefront during the US Civil War. Peyton Farquhar is a southern plantation owner who is tricked into attempting to destroy a strategically important railroad bridge. In fact the bridge is well-guarded, as Farquhar discovers when he is captured and sentenced to be hanged from the bridge. As he awaits his execution, he closes his eyes. When the plank he stands on is released and Farquhar falls from the bridge with the noose around his neck, he experiences a series of perceptions that leads him to believe that the rope has broken and he is miraculously falling towards the river below.

Enduring intense pain from the noose while bobbing and spinning along in the river's current, he eventually emerges from the river and makes his way home to his family, some thirty miles distant. In fact, however, as the story ends, his dead body is depicted as hanging from the bridge. His imagined escape had simply been the result of fragmented momentary perceptions being misinterpreted by his keenly focused but irretrievably traumatized subjective experience.

In the sense that the living and dead are commonly characterized as being separated from each other as if by a great chasm, death is often understood in terms of a one-way bridge from the land of the living to the land of the dead. This metaphor, which may be formulated as **A PERSON DYING IS A PERSON CROSSING A BRIDGE**, occurs often in literary works and has been included as number 13 in the list of **Bridge Metaphor/Metonymy Categories** in the Appendix. The fact that Farquhar is to be hanged on a bridge psychologically reinforces the idea that he is transfixed between the shores of life and death. When the reader finally realizes that his escape was illusory, the "undercurrent" metaphor that commonly causes a bridge to be understood as a connecting point between life and death eases the transition for the reader back from Farquhar's misconstrual of the facts into objective reality as Bierce finally presents it.

The bridge is specifically described as lying between Union army territory on the north and Confederate territory on the south. While occasionally battlefronts are clearly demarcated by a river which separates the opposing sides, the setting described by Bierce is too static to be thoroughly believable. To some extent at least, the bridge between the North and South in the story represents an idealized battlefront rather than an actually existing one. Reflecting

metaphor number 9 in the appendix, **AN INTERSECTION OF DISCRETE STATES IS A BRIDGE**, the bridge accentuates the apposition of the North and the South in the war and in so doing artificially exaggerates Farquhar's standing as a representative of the doomed southern war effort, thereby giving his execution more dramatic impact. [4] If he had simply been hung from a tree branch, all other events and actions in the story might have been the same and yet the resonance of the story would have been completely different, or more accurately, absent. A tree is not typically seen as a connection point between life and death. A tree would not have emphasized the sharp division between the north and south nor would it have functioned metonymically as a representative incursion point within the context of one army's invasion of enemy territory.

To adequately grasp Bierce's rhetorical artifice, however, it is necessary to view the bridge in terms of its relationship with the river. The flow of rivers is often metaphorically linked to the passage of time (as characterized by the conceptual metaphor **TIME IS A RIVER**) and, in fact, Farquhar first thinks of the idea of escape while noticing a piece of wood floating by in the river below. From this point on, time becomes malleable and as Farquhar begins his counterfactual river journey, the reader is carried along over an unanticipated course for the flow of future events. Because the plot began with a depiction of Farquhar about to be hanged on the bridge and then uses an extended flashback to recount events leading up to that scene, the reader already understands that the path of Farquhar's life will somehow lead to the bridge and his probable execution. Farquhar's subsequent imagined escape down the river, then, veers off from this anticipated path. In retrospect, the flow of the water in the river is not to be taken as a literal avenue of escape but a tangible expression of Farquhar's solely cerebral ability to break away from the limitations of corporeal reality and experience a subjective freedom in which the perception of time breaks free of all outside reference points.

In addition to the life-death connection intimated by the bridge before his death, another sort of divide becomes apparent and this is the most crucial aspect of the story. As he hangs from the bridge in the few moments before his actual death occurs, he imagines his escape and journey home. Although Farquhar's consciousness is still thoroughly centered in his body, he has achieved virtual disembodiment through the vividness of his distended imagination. By misinterpreting the small movements of his body below the bridge, his spirit and flesh separate, allowing his thoughts to take him home despite still being technically trapped in his body. This virtual "spirit-flesh separation" is accentuated by the fact that he has been hung from a

bridge. Through his execution on the bridge he leaves his body behind in two senses, first through the power of his imagination, and then subsequently by "crossing" into death.

Bierce's depiction of the bridge, an unusual place for an execution, heightens reader expectations that something strange will occur. Once it seems that an unlikely turn of events has indeed taken place, megametaphorical depiction of the **TIME IS A RIVER** metaphor briefly confirms this misconception, only to be abruptly invalidated by the resumption of the **LIFE IS A JOURNEY** metaphor at the story's close. Throughout the story, the mutually exclusive metaphors **A PERSON DYING IS A PERSON CROSSING A BRIDGE** and **TIME IS A RIVER** both function so as to influence reader expectations concerning the "destination" of Farquhar's life path. A paradox occurs because, conceptually speaking, the doomed man's life has been megametaphorically depicted as moving in two spatial directions and this contradiction must be carefully contemplated by the disoriented reader at the story's end. As in the case of Okamoto's "*Kawa*," the paradox, embedded as it is through megametaphorical details of depiction rather than overt similes or metaphors, adds conceptual interest to the story at a level that defies straightforward analysis.

V. Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*

Book Ⅲ of Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* begins with Frederic Henry's return to the front just before it is overrun by enemy soldiers. Underestimating the speed of the German advance, Henry is unable to move the ambulances in his charge into friendly territory, getting them bogged down in back roads and fields during the retreat. Making his way on foot and dodging enemy patrols, Henry eventually reaches the Tagligmento River and apparent safety. While crossing the bridge, however, Lieutenant Henry is arrested and thereafter discovers that Italian officers are being summarily executed by their compatriots for roles they are assumed to have played in the defeat. Seizing the opportunity when the attention of his captors is focused elsewhere, Henry escapes into the river and is carried downstream. Emerging from the river, he begins to travel towards Milan.

In this key transitional section of the novel, bridges at first represent a series of difficulties that must be navigated during the danger-fraught retreat. Nevertheless, the role of the final bridge encountered is crucially different. In that Hemingway has foregrounded the scene through his detailed depiction of the bridge crossing, readers are given a heightened expectation that something important will happen there and in fact a sudden reversal does take place.

The bridge that should have been the final bridge along Henry's road to safety, nearly becomes the location for his execution. Of course, until that point in the story Lieutenant Henry had been conscientiously fulfilling his duties as an officer under difficult circumstances, so his desertion represents an action that runs counter to his previous portrayal. In this sense the bridge crossing scene demarcates a reversal in Henry's fortunes and his escape down the river emphasizes a newly understood aspect of his character and a new course for his life journey. In retrospect, the bridge's seemingly incidental presence at the scene of Henry's desertion highlights the fact that it is a key turning point in the novel.

If Henry's escape down the river in *A Farewell to Arms* recalls "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" in some respects, the similarities are not coincidental. Hemingway had been an avid reader of Bierce and, as Wagner-Martin has pointed out, he had read "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" at least by 1928, if not before (Wagner-Martin 69-70). Nevertheless, even though the execution scene at the bridge in Hemingway's novel may have been inspired by the Bierce story, the actual metaphorical nuances present in the two stories are not the same, as evidenced by comparing the analysis results for works B and C in Table 1.

Table 1. Bridge Metaphor Comparisons by Work

		Bridge Metaphors/Metonymy Categories by Number (see appendix for complete list)																				
	Name of Work \ Metaphor Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
A	*"Kawa"*																							
a-1	Strack Analysis Results	no	no	no	no	yes	YES	no	YES	YES	no	no	yes	yes	no	YES	no	no	no	no	YES	no	no	no
a-2	Graduate Student Results Avg.	0	0	0.5	0	0.6	0.9	0.1	0.9	0.7	0.2	0	0	0.2	0.1	0	0	0	0	0	0.2	0	0	0
B	"An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge"																							
b-1	Strack Analysis Results	no	no	no	no	yes	no	no	no	YES	no	YES	no	YES	yes	no	no	no	no	YES	yes	no	no	**
b-2	Graduate Student Results Avg.	0	0.3	0	0.1	0.5	0	0	0.4	0.8	0.3	0.4	0.8	0.8	0.5	0	0.1	0.5	0.3	1	1	0.1	0	**
C	*A Farewell to Arms (Book III only)*																							
c-1	Strack Analysis Results	no	yes	no	no	no	yes	no	yes	YES	yes	no	yes	yes	YES	no	no	no	no	YES	yes	no	no	**
c-2	Graduate Student Results Avg.	0	0.8	0	0	0.2	0.2	0	0.6	0.7	0.5	0	0.1	0.9	0.8	0	0	0.3	0.1	0.9	0.67	0	0	**

The numbers 1 through 23 at the top of Table 1 represent the recurrent bridge metaphors detected in the course of research to date. The specific metaphorical formulations that correspond to each number are found in the appendix. After receiving a brief explanation of each of the 23 bridge-related metaphors that are likely to be found in a text in which bridges play a prominent role, participants[5] in a graduate level course on metaphor were asked to evaluate each work for the presence or absence of each metaphor category. The works were analyzed separately after participants finished reading. A 3-point scale was used to force participants to differentiate between presence and absence of metaphor, allowing for "strong pre-

sence" and "weak presence" as two alternatives should the metaphor be seen as active in the text. If the specific metaphor was judged to be strongly present in the story, participants were instructed to answer "YES." If the metaphor was judged to be minimally or vaguely present in the story, participants were requested to answer "yes." If the metaphor was judged to be absent from the story, a "no" answer was to be selected.

The judgments concerning the presence or absence of metaphors in each work represented by lines a-1, b-1, and c-1 in Table 1 are the results of my own analysis. Below my own responses, in a-2, b-2, and c-2 respectively, are the averaged values of graduate student responses, with the scoring calculated as follows: "YES" answers were scored as 1, "yes" answers were scored as 0.5, and "no" answers were scored as 0. Averaged scores in Table 1 have been rounded to the nearest 0.1. Dark and light shading have been added to the table to more easily distinguish between high average positive scores (between 0.51 and 1) and low average positive scores (between 0.01 and 0.5). The results for works B and C do not include scores for Bridge Metaphor/Metonymy Category 23 because the category had not yet been identified when the two works were being evaluated.

Comparing the results for the three works listed in Table 1, some bridge metaphor categories are seen to be active in all three works (the best example of this being category 9) while other categories were active in some works but not in others (for example, category 19 has been judged to be strongly present in "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" and *A Farewell to Arms*, Book Ⅲ, but is completely absent from "*Kawa*"). Although bridges are used metaphorically in each work, the actual activation permutations of specific bridge-related metaphors are different. Simply to state that the bridge depicted in a particular work has been used metaphorically is to grossly oversimplify the role metaphor plays in adding semantic resonance to the story.

Furthermore, each author's strategy for metaphor instantiation varies as well. Whereas Okamoto has used undercurrent metaphors to prepare the way for the simultaneous activation of relatively explicit metaphors found at the surface level of the text, Hemingway's metaphorical strategy recalls that of Bierce in that the metaphoric domains remain camouflaged in the narrator's matter-of-fact depiction of events. Nevertheless, while Bierce plays up the juxtaposition of conflicting metaphoric paths to accentuate the final conceptual paradox, Hemingway's metaphoric change of directions mirrors the plot movement rather than undercuts it and thereby functions largely outside of conscious awareness, reinforcing the plot at a conceptual level

while entirely escaping detection.

VI. On the Difficulties of Thematic Analysis of Megametaphor

In neural terms, reference to any part of a metaphor cluster will lead to widespread if momentary neural activation. Cutler and Clifton have noted that "Studies of the cross-modal priming task have produced evidence for momentary simultaneous activation of all senses of an ambiguous word, irrespective of relative frequency or contextual probability." (1999: 140) In terms of metaphor, then, when metaphorical elements are referred to in the course of depiction, all potentially accessible metaphorical extensions relating to the cluster in question will be momentarily primed. Thereafter, specific details in the text that coincide with any parts of the already primed constellation of metaphors will further activate certain aspects of the metaphors that have already been stimulated by the broad, indiscriminate momentary priming. For a detailed neurobiological account of this process, please refer to my forthcoming paper "Multivalent Metaphor and Literary Resonance: A Neurobiological Perspective."

Looking over the results listed in Table 1, there are some differences evident between the graduate students' judgments and my own. The most extreme difference is perhaps my judgment that metaphor 15 is strongly present in the work "*Kawa*" contrasted with an average score of 0 for the graduate students, indicating that the metaphor which seemed clearly present to me seemed clearly absent to them. Nevertheless, with such exceptional cases aside, the averaged judgments of the graduate students more or less matched my own. From a neural standpoint, it may be said that, although each literary work uses a bridge metaphorically, the differing specifics of depiction result in differing metaphorical activation patterns. Although judgments vary somewhat from reader to reader, different sets of strongly activated bridge metaphors are evident for each respective text.

Furthermore, I have noticed differences in my own perceptions of metaphors from one reading to the next. Although it could be asserted that the difference results from some problem with the mode of evaluation used, a more likely explanation of such inconsistency lies in the complex nature of the literary endeavor itself. Literary texts are not created with ease of interpretation in mind. On the contrary, a text that is deemed "thought-provoking" is likely to be judged more literary than a text judged to be "predictable" or "trite." The complexity of metaphorical interpretation does not end with the text, however. Each individual reader's mind necessarily differs from the minds of other readers, as well. Taking into consideration the

great complexity of the semantic network that constitutes the mind of each individual reader and adding to that the fact that each reader's neural system is being minutely but irreversibly reorganized through the very act of reading the text in question, a different, more subtle interpretation of the variance emerges. In that both literary works and the minds of those who read them are exceedingly complex, in terms of resonance, the subjective appreciation of complex metaphors should be seen as *a unique and unrepeatable experience even at the level of the individual reader*. The very act of reading the text changes the mind of the reader in subtle ways so that obtaining an identical semantic resonance through re-reading will be impossible.

Although subjective impressions do indeed differ, each work analyzed contains at least a few metaphor categories judged either to be "strongly present" or "absent." For example, Bridge Metaphor/Metonymy Categories 19 (**MILITARY INCURSION IS CROSSING A BRIDGE**) and 20 (**A PLACE OF SACRIFICE IS A BRIDGE**) have been unanimously judged to be strongly present in the story "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" by the graduate students. Analyzing the results (6 "YES" responses, 0 "yes" responses, and 0 "no" responses) using a chi-square test, results for these two metaphors with respect to the Bierce story are seen to be significant. ($p<0.01$).[6] The "no" answers as well (with average scores of 0 on Table 1, line a-2, including categories 1, 3, 6, 7, 15, and 22 for "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge) were seen to be significant ($p<0.01$) as well. Certain metaphors were seen to be unanimously present (with average scores of "1" in Table 1) and absent (average scores of "0") in "*Kawa*" and *A Farewell to Arms*, Book Ⅲ, as well. In a sense, the multiple, unanimous determinations that certain metaphors are not present in the story, even more than the unanimous judgments of "strongly present," demonstrate that all literary works containing bridge metaphor are not created (or perceived) equally.

Overall, then, the results shown in Table 1 statistically demonstrate that the permutations of bridge metaphor categories activated will vary from work to work. On the other hand, in that some of the results of graduate student judgments concerning certain categories are statistically ambiguous (those with less than unanimous agreement), it will be necessary to allow that firm and final judgments as to presence or absence may not be possible with respect to some categories. This is likely due to the subtle ways in which subjective impressions differ from reader to reader.

In fact, the list of bridge-related metaphors in the appendix may not yet be complete. To a very limited extent, I expect that the list will be added to as research continues. As long as

newly discovered bridge metaphors are not extremely recurrent, adding them to the list will present little problem. If, however, an extremely recurrent and, in retrospect, strikingly obvious bridge-related metaphor were to surface, all previous research would need to be re-evaluated with respect to it. While such a possibility is indeed a concern, to quote former Canadian Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson, "We'll jump off that bridge when we come to it."

It will be worthwhile to examine the previous statement carefully. The phrase as typically expressed is "We'll cross that bridge when we come to it." Upon closer inspection, this saying is an extension of the **LIFE IS A JOURNEY** metaphor cluster. The idea of "jumping off of a bridge" rather than crossing it represents a sudden change of metaphorical direction, to say nothing of intention. Pearson's witticism is memorable because it is an obviously mixed metaphor that has an element of coherence at the lexical level but reveals its conceptual-level incoherence upon reflection as an after-effect. This one-liner represents exactly the sort of metaphor combination that Okamoto, Bierce, and Hemingway successfully wrote into their stories. The difference is that the dissonant metaphors these authors have instantiated are not juxtaposed in a flippant manner for obvious humorous effect. Okamoto, Bierce, and Hemingway were not interested in adding incoherence for incoherence's sake. Instead, they sought to instantiate a psychologically profound type of incoherence. Metaphor has been used to access both harmonies and dissonances at the conceptual level while remaining mostly impervious to spontaneous analysis.

When conceptual harmonies and dissonances are broadly embedded in a literary work, scholars have traditionally termed this effect "symbolism." [7] I have not yet mentioned the word symbolism in this paper because my goal has been to demonstrate that psycho-literary symbolism is not such a vague concept after all, only a complex one. Symbolism may be practically defined in terms of cognitive linguistics and neurobiology as a resonant effect resulting from the simultaneous activation of a thematically unified group of otherwise incongruous conceptual metaphors.

VII. Conclusion

There are metaphorical contradictions at work in these stories that add resonance to the respective work as a whole. In each story, time (as expressed through the life path of the protagonist in each story) is seen to move in two spatial directions. And in each story, the thematic element that allows such conceptual sleight of hand to go unnoticed is the bridge. The bridge,

as a constituent element in both the **TIME IS A RIVER** and the **LIFE IS A JOURNEY** metaphor clusters, represents an ideal test case for demonstrating the potential complexity of metaphorical function in a literary work. While truncated views of metaphorical effect may be adequate for linguists who tend to analyze metaphor at the phrase or sentence level, literary researchers especially must be prepared to deal with multivalent metaphor and symbolism.

Furthermore, the bridge, to the extent that it facilitates such interplay between conflicting metaphors, may be seen as a multivalent metaphorical thematic element. It is probably not an overstatement to say that the resonance achieved in each of these stories would not have been possible had a bridge not been incorporated into the plot. "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" would not have been the same story if Farquhar had simply been hanged from a tree near a munitions depot somewhere in the woods, although there is nothing precluding the creation of such a narrative. The passage depicting Frederic Henry's desertion during the retreat from Caporetto in Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* would not have been as emotionally satisfying for the reader without the bridge to heighten interest, prefigure an unexpected plot twist, and propel the protagonist onto a new path away from the war and toward his ultimate appointment with fate in Switzerland. And finally, Okamoto Kanoko's short story "*Kawa*" would have lost a great deal of psychological impact if Naosuke's identity had not been problematized as it was through his building of the bridge for the narrator's marriage ceremony. In other words, minus the bridge, each plot could have been expressed more or less as it was depicted but nearly all of the metaphorical undercurrents so crucial to the success of each story would have been lost.

Through this paper, I have demonstrated the following four ideas: firstly, that metaphor and especially megametaphor can function even outside the scope of conscious awareness. Secondly, that the depth or resonance we notice in literature may owe a great deal to the activity of such *sub rosa* conceptual effects. Thirdly, that symbolism is not just a vague word useful for obfuscation but a concept that, although complex, may be practically defined in terms of conceptual metaphor theory and applied to achieve more refined literary analysis of semantically complex works. And finally, that the semantic value of bridges found in literary works should never be underestimated.

Notes

[1] These categories undoubtedly apply to other kinds of aesthetic experiences as well but as this article will deal mainly with metaphor, I'll limit the explanation to semantics.

[2] Okamoto Kanoko (1889-1939) was a an influential *tanka* poet and prose author. She was a disciple of Yosano Akiko, an author remembered both for her highly evocative poetry and her translation of *The Tale of Genji* into modern colloquial Japanese.

[3] Due to the fact that the conceptual skewing of each narrative is instantiated by way of submerged megametaphor which is rarely allowed to break the narrative surface in an overt fashion, incoherence of the kind typically weeded out by the Invariance Principle (c.f., Lakoff & Turner 1989), goes undetected. Indeed, from this perspective, the Invariance Principle seems less to be a rule that determines how metaphor always works than ex post facto evidence that obviously illogical aspects of metaphor tend to be noticed and thereby increase the likelihood that the metaphor will be rejected. Put differently, blatantly illogical metaphors do not tend to survive to become fossilized into language. It is for this reason that the Invariance Principle displays such thoroughgoing efficiency at sentence and phrase level. Subtle dissonance, on the other hand, does indeed pass itself off as "depth," especially in contexts like literature in which there is a strong expectation for resonance.

[4] Strictly speaking, the North-South contradistinction is an example of Metaphor/Metonymy Category number 19, **MILITARY INCURSION IS CROSSING A BRIDGE**. In that the advance of the Union army is displayed solely at the bridge, through metonymy the bridge becomes a representative and deeply significant point of military incursion within the overall context of the war. This is so not because the bridge, whether fictional or based on historical record, has special military significance, but simply because the author has chosen to highlight it within the context of the story.

[5] Special thanks to the graduate students who participated in my course on literary metaphor, not only for their active participation and keen insights, but also for giving permission to have their analysis mentioned in this research. 2005-2006 spring seminar participants were: Fumie Horiuchi, Chihiro Miwa, Gōichi Muraishi, Tomoko Norimatsu, Takashi Tsuda, and Kei Yoshimura.

[6] Due to the low number of participating subjects, specific responses within a metaphor category ("YES," "yes," and "no") were non-significant with respect to the other responses in post hoc tests. The number of graduate student subjects (6 for the works of Bierce and

Hemingway, and 5 for that of Okamoto) fell short of the number (8 subjects) which would have produced significant results (given unanimous agreement) in post hoc tests across responses. Similar experiments carried out in the future will be administered taking this minimum subject number threshold into account.

[7] This paper characterizes (what I will call) "psycho-literary symbolism." This type of symbolism should not be confused with the terms "symbolism" or "symbolization" as they are commonly used in linguistics to denote the relationship between a concept (or "semantic unit," in Langacker's terminology) and the sound image, written text, or other communication medium associated with it. (c.f., Langacker 76-77)

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Appendix:

Bridge Metaphor/Metonymy Categories (updated June 3 , 2006)

1 . OVERCOMING A DIFFICULTY IN LIFE IS BUILDING A BRIDGE

2 . OVERCOMING A DIFFICULTY IN LIFE IS CROSSING A BRIDGE

Corollary a- **MAKING PROGRESS IS CROSSING BRIDGES** (extension of 2)

3 . DEVELOPING A RELATIONSHIP IS BUILDING A BRIDGE

4 . AVOIDING A RELATIONSHIP IS NOT BUILDING A BRIDGE (extension of 3)

5 . ENDING A RELATIONSHIP IS DESTROYING A BRIDGE (extension of 3)

6 . DEVELOPING A RELATIONSHIP IS CROSSING A BRIDGE

7 . AVOIDING A RELATIONSHIP IS NOT CROSSING A BRIDGE (extension of 6)

8 . ENDING A RELATIONSHIP IS CROSSING A BRIDGE (extension of 6)

9 . AN INTERSECTION OF DISCRETE STATES IS A BRIDGE

Aspect a- Bridge as Dialectic Catalyst

Aspect b- (ironic) Bridge as Apposition Accentuator

10. ACTING DECISIVELY IS CROSSING A BRIDGE (extension of 2 , 9)

11. SEEING FROM A TRANSCENDENT VIEWPOINT IS SEEING FROM A BRIDGE

12. SEEING FROM A TRANSCENDENT VIEWPOINT IS SEEING A BRIDGE (extension of 11)

Aspect a- Bridge as a framing artifice to heighten interest and imply significance in the narrative

13. A PERSON DYING IS A PERSON CROSSING A BRIDGE (extension of 8 , 9 , 11)

Corollary a- **AN ANIMAL DYING IS AN ANIMAL CROSSING A BRIDGE** (extension of 13)

14. ENCOUNTERING A TWIST OF FATE IS CROSSING A BRIDGE

Corollary a- **NARRATIVE REVERSAL IS ARCING BRIDGE STRUCTURE**

15. A BRIDGE-BUILDER FOR A BRIDGE (metonymy)

16. CULTURAL SOPHISTICATION IS BRIDGE TECHNOLOGY (extension of 15)

17. **TENSION IN SOCIETY IS STRUCTURAL STRESS IN A BRIDGE** (ironic extension of 16)

18. **PREPARATION FOR MILITARY INCURSION IS BUILDING A BRIDGE** (metonymy, also ext. of 1 , 3 , 9)

19. **MILITARY INCURSION IS CROSSING A BRIDGE** (metonymy, also extension of 2 , 6 , 9)

20. **A PLACE OF SACRIFICE IS A BRIDGE**

    Aspect a- place for human or animal sacrifice in overt religious ritual (2 , 6 , 8 , 10, 12, 13)

    Aspect b- place for material votive offering to deity (2 , 6 ,10,12)

    Aspect c- place for individual to forego self-interest for some greater good (2 , 6 , 9 ,10,11,12)

    Aspect d- place for death of individual as dramatic representative of larger group (8 , 9 ,12,13,14)

21. **A PERSON HIDDEN FROM SOCIETY IS A PERSON UNDER A BRIDGE** (extension of 2 , 7 ,11,12)

    Corollary a- **AN ANIMAL/A THING HIDDEN FROM SOCIETY**

    Corollary b- **AN ACTION HIDDEN FROM SOCIETY**

22. **A NATURAL SPAN IS A BRIDGE** (iconicity)

    Corollary a- **A RAINBOW IS A BRIDGE**

    Corollary b- **THE MILKY WAY IS A BRIDGE**

    Corollary c- **AN ISTHMUS IS A BRIDGE**

23. **EXPERIENCING A TEST IN LIFE IS PASSING UNDER A BRIDGE** (i.e., during river travel)

    Corollary a- **MAKING PROGRESS IS PASSING UNDER BRIDGES** (extension of 23)